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Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from *Productive Math Struggle*. This resource presents a productive struggle walkthrough tool for teacher behaviors, student behaviors, or both.

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Productive Struggle Look-Fors

Teachers, principals, and district leaders routinely collect evidence to make decisions about instructional strategies and progress. But, faulty indicators or misguided perceptions can lead to poor adjustments. Understanding what kinds of productive struggle behaviors to look for is important when considering the vitality of productive struggle in the classroom. Below, we present a productive struggle walkthrough tool for teacher behaviors, student behaviors, or both.

As a teacher, you could set a yearly professional goal that takes aim at improving productive struggle. This tool can be used to collect evidence recognizing progress toward the goal. Note that the number of behaviors to “look for” may need to be adjusted based on the amount of time spent in a classroom. To measure growth, you could set goals for increasing the frequency of occurrence of a certain behavior(s) or all of the behaviors as the year progresses. Of course, the tool could also be simply used to collect evidence for personal, periodic reflections.

This tool could be coupled with the Productive Struggle Self-Inventory from the Introduction (page 7). To do this, you can complete the inventory at the beginning of the school year and again at the end of the year, with a goal of increasing certain, if not all, statements on the survey.

Principals or district leaders have a stake in looking for the right signs of student struggle and the teacher behaviors that elicit it. They too can use the productive struggle walkthrough tool. They can use the tool to look for teacher behaviors, student behaviors, or both. Elements of a productive struggle “look-for” tool are captured in Figure 1.2. Keep in mind that each element might not be evident during a short visit to a math class. Some things may or may not be present due to when the class is visited or how long the visit lasts. Elements could also be removed to improve the functionality of the tool. The tool is available to download. The reproducible also has space to record feedback that should be shared with the teacher.

Productive Struggle Classroom Walkthrough Tool

- ❑ High-quality task is the centerpiece of the lesson.
- ❑ Lesson is focused on understanding the math rather than simply finding a solution.
- ❑ The classroom shows evidence of resources that support student struggle.

- ❑ Students have access to instructional resources and mathematics tools.
- ❑ Students are purposefully engaged in the task.
- ❑ Students attempt to overcome challenges.
- ❑ Students ask questions about the task or how they might proceed.
- ❑ Students support one another without taking over.

- ❑ Teacher circulates to monitor student thinking, progress, and struggle.
- ❑ Teacher pauses engagement to discuss strategies, representations, or questions.
- ❑ Student solutions are discussed and explored when the task is debriefed.
- ❑ Debriefing discussion highlights challenges and strategies used for overcoming them.
- ❑ Students reflect on struggle at the end of the lesson.